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RECENT LITERATURE

(Received since April 1, 1919)

Hollister, N. EAST AFRICAN MAMMALS IN THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL MUSEUM. Bulletin 99, U. S. Nat. Mus. PART I. INSECTIVORA, CHIROPTERA, AND CARNIVORA. Pp. 1-194, text fig. 1-3, pls. 1-55, August 16, 1918. PART II. RODENTIA, LAGOMORPHA, AND TUBULIDENTATA. Pp. i-x, 1-184, text fig. 1, pls. 1-44, May 16, 1919.

This work, as represented by the two parts that have appeared, is a critical list of 349 species and subspecies of East African mammals contained in the United States National Museum and comprising the majority of those known. The third part, as yet unpublished, will include the primates and ungulates, and the whole will thus form the nearest approach to a technical compendium of the mammals of this part of the world that can reasonably be hoped for at this time. The area covered by the list is an arbitrary one including the political divisions of Sudan, Somali, Abyssinia, Uganda, British East Africa, and German East Africa. The treatment is largely critical and technical, serving to coordinate a great part of the scattered work that has been done in recent years. Besides lists of localities for each species, there is much miscellaneous biological data mainly from the field notes of the collectors, and with each group of species there is an extensive table of measurements of individual specimens, including a large number of types. The extent and value of these tables may be indicated by noting that for two subspecies of lions cranial and dental measurements are given for no less than forty-six specimens. Another feature of great usefulness is found in the half-tone plates of the skulls of type-specimens including all those possessed by the Museum, sixty-three in Part I and seventy-five in Part II. Most of these are shown in natural size and in two, or frequently three, aspects. Those of Part I are uniformly of very high quality and, taken in connection with the measurements, furnish a basis for comparison closely approximating that of the specimens themselves. Those of Part II are in a number of cases not so well executed as those of Part I.

The labor connected with such a list as this is prodigious and, as the author states, it involves "what amounts to monographic work in each group and careful identification of every specimen." That it has been exceedingly well done is very evident to anyone having even a slight acquaintance with the field it covers. The specimens upon which the list is based were mostly obtained in recent years principally by two expeditions, the Smithsonian African Expedition led by Colonel Roosevelt and the Paul J. Rainey Expedition, both of which were accompanied by that experienced and successful collector, Edmund Heller. They illustrate in a most convincing way the value of modern methods, of trained workers, and of concentrated attack on a particular field. Of the 349 forms listed, 223, or 63 per cent, have been discovered and described in the last ten years. Only 81, or 20 per cent, were known prior to the year 1900. The total number of specimens examined was 6696. It is evident, therefore, that hopes may not be wholly vain for a knowledge of the mammals of other continents coordinate with that we now have for North America.

—W. H. Osgood.